

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT ON
PATENTABILITY (ATTACHED PAGE)

International File No.: PCT/EP2004/012796

Re Item V.

1. The following document is cited in the present office action:

D1: DE-A 100 37 004

2. Novelty of independent **Claim 1**:

Document **D1** is regarded as the prior art most closely related to the object of **Claim 1**. It discloses a method in accordance with the introductory clause of **Claim 1**.

Therefore, the object of **Claim 1** differs from the method known from **D1** by virtue of its characterizing clause, according to which each work roll also has a barrel lengthened by the amount of the CVC shifting stroke with a one-sided setback in the area of the barrel edge, wherein the work roll is positioned in various positions relative to the strip edge by predetermination of the shift positions of the shiftable work roll as a function of the strip width, and within different strip width regions, the shift position of the work roll is predetermined by a piecewise-linear step function.

- 2.1 The object of **Claim 1** is thus novel (Article 33(2) PCT).

3. Novelty of independent **Claim 4**:

Document **D1** is regarded as the prior art most closely related to the object of **Claim 4**. It discloses a method in accordance with the introductory clause of **Claim 4**.

Therefore, the object of **Claim 4** differs from the method known from **D1** by virtue of its characterizing clause, according to which both the work rolls and the intermediate rolls have a

symmetrical barrel that is longer by the amount of the axial CVC shifting stroke and is provided with a curved roll contour with superimposed CVC/CVC^{plus} cross section and with a one-sided setback (d).

3.1 The object of **Claim 4** is thus novel (Article 33(2) PCT).

4. Inventive activity of **Claims 1 and 4**:

The of **Claims 1 and 4** of the present application achieve, in a way that is not obvious, the objective of covering the operating modes of CVC/CVC^{plus} technology and the technology of strip edge-oriented shifting of the rolls with a geometrically identical set of rolls for the work rolls and intermediate rolls. In addition, the cross section of the work roll can act directly at the roll gap, since it is transmitted not only indirectly through the intermediate roll.

4.1 The object of **Claims 1 and 4** is thus based on inventive activity (Article 33(3) PCT).

5. **Claims 2 to 3 and 6 to 8** are dependent on **Claims 1 and 4, respectively**, and thus likewise satisfy the requirements of the PCT with respect to novelty and inventive activity.

6. The polynomial of nth degree in **Claim 5** leads to infinitely many possibilities. A definition of this type is unclear in accordance with Article 6 PCT.

7. The object of **Claims 1 to 8** is unquestionably commercially viable (Art. 33(4) PCT).